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A

Statement

OF THE

CRUELITIES,

ABUSES, AND FRAUDS,

WHICH ARE PRACTISED

IN

MAD-HOUSES.

BY J. W. ROGERS, SURGEON.

SECOND EDITION.

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TO THE

Right Hon. George Rose.



SIR,

AWARE of that temper of mind which has always made you actively desirous of promoting and seconding any effort which gave a fair promise of being advantageous to society; I should have been at no loss to whom I should dedicate a work intended to effect an essential alleviation of the sufferings of the most unfortunate portion of mankind, had I even been ignorant of the part you have taken in the investigation of the subject of the following pages. I feel it, however, unnecessary to make any observations here, on a statement of facts, the importance of which, by the bene-

volent and enlightened statesman, will be instantly acknowledged.

I have only, then, to seize the opportunity of subscribing myself, with the greatest respect,

SIR,

Your most obedient humble Servant,

J. W. ROGERS.

30, BROAD STREET PLACE,
Nov. 17, 1815.

ADVERTISEMENT.



THE following statement was written before the appointment of the committee of the House of Commons, for enquiring into the state of *mad-houses*; but being fully aware of the extreme difficulty of obtaining evidence which might be expected to penetrate into the recesses of fraud, cruelty, and abuse, in these receptacles of misfortune, I was no way disappointed on reading the report, to find that the *root* of the evil was still but *slightly* touched, as will appear from a perusal of this tract; the publication of which I now consider to be more than ever necessary to the ends of *justice* and *humanity*.

PREFACE.

IN an age, when the bare name of cruelty is sufficient to excite the general abhorrence of mankind,—when philanthropy extends her hand to the sufferer of every clime, of every country,—even in the bosom of her favored land, in the heart of the British empire,—*her* empire, to learn that cruelties the most horrid, the most disgraceful, are daily practised, almost under the eyes, and in the midst of her benevolent citizens, famed for having “ hearts to feel, and hands open as day to melting charity,” by certain licensed ruffians,* on the persons of thousands of the most unfortunate of human beings, whose afflicting state should alone insure to them the commiseration of every heart not wholly callous to the feelings

* Every one employed by a licensed person, becomes himself virtually licensed.

of humanity, must surely excite no less astonishment than horror: yet, such is the fact. And it is with a view of rousing the attention of the public, and awakening to a sense of obvious duty, the *indolent humane*, that I bring forward the following statement of facts.

I have given a circumstantial account of some of the actors in these inhuman scenes, to shew the necessity of the most vigilant investigation in the choice of persons for such situations, and as a caution against the cunning and artifice of these avaricious barbarians; a portion of whose blood-stained wealth is employed in keeping secret, and perpetuating enormities, that disgrace not only those whose duty it is to prevent them, but the country in which they are suffered.

STATEMENT,

&c. &c.

IT was my fortune to be placed in a situation that gave me an opportunity of ascertaining the facts which I am about to relate. How I became thus circumstanced, who have neither been the master of a mad-house, nor a keeper, nor a patient, nor in any subservient station, may doubtless excite curiosity; and it is certain, there are few perfectly disinterested men on whom such a lot can have fallen. But an explanation here cannot be wanting to establish the veracity of my statement, since I will most gladly and freely communicate with those who, happily, may have both the will and the power to aid effectually in putting a stop to

the atrocities I shall expose. To a vast number of facts I have been *eye-witness*; and of others, equally interesting, I have obtained such irrefragable proof, as must satisfy the most incredulous: and I must lay the greatest stress on what I now say, intreating the reader never to dismiss it from his mind, while he is perusing the following pages, that when he meets with *general* statements, he may not suppose I could not produce cases, but be aware of the impropriety of doing so, from a due consideration to the feelings of the friends and connections of such unfortunate persons. I must beg leave also to say, that I am far from wishing to make this relation of afflicting facts an amusing tale for the boudoir of the luxurious and unfeeling. From such readers I could hope no advantage; I address those only who think the sufferings of their fellow-creatures an object of sufficient interest to claim their attention. The deep impression these scenes have made upon me can never be obliterated. Resolved to exert myself to the utmost of my power to render at least less dreadful the situation of the unfortunate beings.

who may be doomed to experience confinement in a mad-house, after long revolving the subject in my mind, I was convinced that there could be no method so effectual, as a direct appeal to the humanity of the public; fully sensible that if a statement of such inhuman cruelties were not sufficient to excite a general and determined interposition, it would be vain to hope for melioration from any other means.

If it should be asked why I have so long delayed making this exposure, I must observe, that all attempts to reform great and inveterate abuses, unless they be made effectually, serve only to consolidate them; for the guilty parties will spare no means of illusion, and will be strengthened in their iniquity, by ineffectual opposition. It behoved me, therefore, to consider whether my individual testimony would have sufficient weight with the public mind to turn the balance against the false witnesses, which great wealth, unchecked by any sense of religious or moral obligation, would, I well knew, bring against me. While I was thus doubtful in what manner to proceed, the sub-

ject fortunately came before the public, under the sanction of names too well and too highly appreciated, to leave any doubt as to the motives which actuated their interference, and left me the hope that my efforts might, at least, be considered as auxiliary in this great cause of humanity.

I have endeavored to raise in the breast of every man, who feels at all, a sense of the indispensable duties of men towards each other, and particularly to enforce the necessity of vigilance in cases where the welfare of the species is so deeply involved. The observations and appeals, therefore, which accompany this statement of facts, will, I trust, be considered as not insignificant to the end which every good man must, on this occasion, have in view.

The very numerous cases of insanity which we unhappily meet with, render the necessity of enquiring into the management of places of confinement urgent and indispensable. It were not more absurd to expect a man should

recover the use of a fractured limb, while it was continually exposed to the risk of being broken afresh, than to expect the diseased mind should be restored to health, while the patient was exposed to the pinch of cold, the septic atmosphere of crowded rooms, and the consequences of brutal treatment; in short, to a combination of evils, moral and physical, sufficient to overpower the soundest intellect.

To what causes we should attribute the frequency of a malady, so humiliating to human nature, (although it is a subject I have long considered, and on which I may possibly, when my leisure will permit, offer my opinion fully to the public,) it is, at present, foreign to my purpose to enquire; yet I cannot forbear observing, that a great and primary cause of most of the diseases of the mind, as well as of the body, is the luxurious, intemperate, and dissipated mode of life, which now so generally prevails; it is, above all, from the practice of drinking strong liquors, that the greatest evil arises. It is repugnant to all reason to suppose, that the habit of drinking those liquors,

of which a small quantity will, for a time, make a man as mad as those maniacs whose malady has arisen from other causes, can be continued without occasioning a material derangement of the faculties of the mind. All stimulants relax in proportion to their first impulsive power, and when the nerves are thus debilitated, they yield to the slightest attack; a cold, obstruction of the natural evacuations, agitation, will often in this state produce serious consequences. Unnatural hours, are perhaps, second only in the power of destroying health, bodily and mental; in which work, indolence also has no small share. People are apt to imagine that there are no diseases of the mind but what we call madness; lesser aberrations, being common, are not thought of; but a slight cold is as much a disease as a confirmed asthma: so ill humour, caprice, moroseness, peevishness, vacillation, are unquestionably diseases of the mind, and must be threatened with the rod, or humoured with the rattle. When long suffered to gain upon the understanding, they are often the forerunners of deeper derangement. The perfection of temperament, and

to speak morally, I may add, the perfection of the human character, is, when the head is cool and the heart warm; but the effects of intemperance, are to reverse this natural order, and render the head hot and the heart cold. But, to leave this digression, and proceed with my immediate subject.

I think it necessary, in the first place, to give some account of persons concerned in the management of some of the principal mad-houses, public and private; by which a chain of connection will be exposed, that will enable the reader to account for the rise and continuance of abuses, the existence of which it would otherwise be difficult to conceive.

A person who has long acted a conspicuous part in these scenes, began his career in life as a porter at the gate of a private mad-house, soon after became keeper, when he was initiated into the secret proceedings of this dark asylum. In due time he was admitted to a share in the concern, having previously married the housemaid. By means, easily to be conceived,

he engaged the master of a public institution to recommend patients to his house. The son and daughter of these two worthies inter-married, and the former having been brought up as an apothecary, added in no small degree to the gains of the family. The salary of the master alluded to, together with that of his wife, amounted to about one hundred and sixty pounds per annum. He has accumulated a fortune of at least thirty thousand pounds! It would be affronting common sense, to make this fact a subject of comment. Bearing then these circumstances in mind, the reader will follow us through our work, without wondering at the consequences of so formidable and direful a coalition.*

When the friends of an insane person are desirous of placing him under confinement,

* The reader will see that I could not avoid introducing this family compact, without injustice to the cause I am advocating, not only on account of its immediate influence, but as a general and most important cautionary statement, for the consideration of those who are earnest in their wishes to effect a radical reform.

being generally strangers to the mode of proceeding, they frequently apply to the master of some public lunatic institution, suppose the person before-mentioned. After learning the condition of the friends of the patient, and whence they come, he finds out whether they are likely to be profitable to him; possibly they may come from a distant part: he will then enquire in what way they mean to furnish the patient with clothes and linen, offering, as a great favor, to supply the necessary articles himself, and take the patient under his own management. It now becomes a question how the lunatic is to be disposed of till he can be admitted, as the place is generally full, and he must take his turn, which, perhaps, may not be for some weeks. The answer is, ‘He must be sent to a private mad-house.’ ‘Will you have the goodness to recommend one to me, where he will be taken great care of? for I understand that they treat their patients but indifferently at these places.’ ‘That is very true, (answers the master,) and indeed these private mad-house keepers are such a set of d——d rascals, (to use his own words) that I don’t

know which to recommend to you ; yet if you take him to ——— he will, I think, be treated there better than at any other house I know of.' The reader need not be at a loss for the *motive* for these recommendations, when he is told that, in return, from one house only, he receives a *douceur* of *five hundred a year!*

When a person is taken to a private mad-house, he is welcomed with smiles by the master and mistress, who deeply sympathize with his friends on the unfortunate occurrence, and promise every care and attention; and the price of his board being fixed, the friends take their leave, fully satisfied that their relative will have every justice done him, from the kind and apparently feeling behavior of the master and mistress.

On the departure of the friends, the unhappy patient is conducted to his appointed destination ; but if he should attempt to resist the rough handling of the keeper, he is speedily seized on by two or more fellows, who drag him to the common room for patients of his

class; the strait waiscoat is put on, and *his hands and legs firmly fixed in irons*. In this state he remains till he becomes calm from exhaustion. I have known numberless instances of persons having their legs and wrists dreadfully lacerated from being improperly confined; and what may not be expected, when they are left entirely to the care and management of keepers, the greater part of whom are more hardened brutes than it is possible for imagination to conceive? and I am sorry to be obliged to say, that I have observed even a greater degree of ferocity, if possible, in the female keepers than in the men.

It is unquestionably the duty of masters of mad-houses to visit all their patients at least once a day; but this duty is so far from being performed by them, that I have known masters neglect the inspection of their houses even for a period of two months. This cruel indifference to the accumulated sufferings which their patients may endure from being thus left to the mercy of the keepers, shews plainly the disposition of such masters, and what must be

expected from their own conduct towards the wretched objects who are placed under their care.

The unfortunate being is now left confined with chains in his sleeping place, unable to turn on either side; so that the flesh, from constantly lying in the same position, mortifies. In this state some constitutions will hold out long, and endure the greatest torture, before death relieves them.*

It is proper, before I proceed to a farther statement of acts of direct cruelty, that as one cause of such cruelty, I should point out the frauds which take place in regard to food, clothing, and medicine. The peculation in these articles is very great. Medicine is always poured in by the apothecary in such quantity, that it commonly exceeds in charge the bill for board, &c. amounting to as much as would have afforded the patient, for a long time, those

* It is not to be understood that this treatment always takes place, but unhappily it is too general.

comforts of which he must in consequence be deprived.

Whatever stock of clothing may be allowed by his friends, he is generally kept in the barest state, except when visited by them; he is then reported to be a great destroyer of his apparel; which being believed, and new clothes supplied, those which had been deposited untouched in the store room are taken possession of, and go to clothe the patients who are provided for by the master, being charged by him, as if he had purchased them.

If a patient be allowed porter or wine, he will get but a small portion of either, particularly of the latter. From the enormous expences incurred, the friends become tired, or are unable to support them; the consequence is, that he is removed to some inferior situation in the house, possibly an under-ground cellar, where he ends his miserable existence.

Thus does the grasp of avarice deprive the wretched maniac of the chance of recovery,

by fraudulently withholding the comforts assigned him ; or, at least, the benevolent intention of his friends to ameliorate his situation is totally frustrated.

If a patient refuse to take his food at the pleasure of his keeper, it is the practice to attempt to force it down his throat ; and this is generally done with such inhuman violence, that in the act numbers are suffocated. The following is one of many instances I could adduce of the consequences of this brutal practice.*

* The vehicle commonly employed to convey food, is a sort of tea-pot with a very long spout, in the use of which, unless great care be taken, the danger of strangulation is imminent. The spout is generally too long ; no regular method of opening the mouth is thought of ; a large key is commonly employed, and used with such impatience that the lips and gums are torn, and the teeth often forced out. An instrument might be regularly used for opening the mouth, of a simple construction, consisting of two metallic plates united at one end, between which a screw acting gradually, obviates all danger, and allows no greater opening than is sufficient for the introduction of nutriment.

A gentleman who was confined in a room by himself, refusing to take his food, the keeper proceeded to force him, and in so doing used such violence, that the patient called loudly for assistance, saying, ‘ For God’s sake come and help me, or I shall be murdered:’ but this exclamation, though it was distinctly heard both by the master and mistress, was not attended to: the noise ceased, and the keeper presently came to acquaint his master, that while forcing the gentleman, he went off in a fit! In these cases a note is dispatched to the friends, and the body taken away without farther enquiry. In another instance, the upper part of the mouth was forced through with the handle of a spoon. The injury was so great, that the friends of the patient discovered it, and removed him.

When lunatics have a propensity to talk more than is agreeable to the people of the house, it is a custom to muffle them; this is done by tying a towel or cloth over their mouths, and round their heads, and with such indifference to the consequences, that respira-

tion is rendered extremely difficult and painful, and it becomes a species of torture consistent with the general barbarity of the place.

Some of the most shocking effects of the savage and cowardly exercise of lawless power, are instanced in the blows which are given to patients, even when bound hand and foot. I have seen gentlemen secured in a chair, their hands and feet manacled, in which situation, on a slight murmur, they have been struck with the clenched fist of a brawny villain, till the blood has gushed from different parts of their faces. One of the gentlemen exposed to this cruel degradation, was a *gal-
lant officer, who had highly distinguished him-
self*. Another patient under similar circumstances, was deprived of the sight of an eye by a blow. Will it be believed that in a country of christians, *this is a daily and unproved
practice?* But if such is the natural cruelty of these men, what must their lot be who are exposed to it, when exercised, as it often is, with all the additional wantonness of intoxication!

I shall relate another case, demonstrating equal ferocity of disposition. A patient, for some trifling refractory airs, was frequently lashed on the bare back with a knotted cord, by a keeper, assisted by another ruffian, similarly armed, in so merciless a manner, that it is impossible he should have escaped the most serious injury. This patient died shortly after; and no doubt can be entertained that his death was accelerated by ill-treatment.

In reflecting on these cruelties, should the reader ever have had a dear relation or friend under circumstances which rendered restriction necessary, and occasioned him to be placed in one of these asylums, with the confidence that he would there have a better chance of recovery than at home, and from the supposition that the best medical aid would be afforded him, superadded to every advantage that could be derived from experience, and that at all events, he would receive the common attentions of humanity, with every alleviation his miserable situation would admit;—how, I say, must his mind be pained—his heart

grieved, when he sees the probability that his relative, or friend, instead of such treatment, may have undergone cruelties, and lingered in torments, from an exposure to which, even the murderer—the most hardened and abandoned criminals, are exempted! How must he be shocked to think, that instead of the returning dawn of reason in his friend being met by a kind and helping hand, it was repulsed with blows, and probably by harsh and brutal opposition repelled for ever!

If any one should unthinkingly imagine that these cruelties can in any degree be necessary, it will be a sufficient refutation of so dangerous an error, to refer him to the noble and extensive establishment of Dr. Fox, near Bristol. The order here observed, the excellence of the food, the healthful cleanliness, and above all, the humanity which is invariably exercised, are truly admirable, and reflect the highest honor on the worthy and enlightened founder. In this asylum, when coercion appears necessary, the patient is rather coaxed than frightened into compliance; so that of the

numerous patients restored, we never find any one alarmed at the thought or sight of his keeper, but on the contrary impressed with a strong sense of gratitude for the kindness he has experienced.

I cannot too much inculcate, that the recovery of insane persons, depends on their receiving the most humane attention. The irritation, rage, terror or depression, which brutal treatment necessarily produces, must always be fatal to convalescence. I knew a lady who had continued a long time in a state of derangement in her own house, and recovered her intellects perfectly in a very short time, merely by the removal of a morose keeper, and the attentions of a person of an opposite character.

Patients are frequently ordered the use of the cold bath, and this prescription is very readily complied with by the keepers, from motives, which humanity and decency must alike blush to learn, namely, that it affords them great amusement! in the gratification of

which, they so entirely exhaust the strength of the miserable object of their mirth, by repeated plunges, that instead of the proposed benefit, the greatest injury must be sustained.

The following fact will fully shew the disposition of these hell-hounds. A patient, for whom the bath had been ordered, on his first emersion, called out, ‘Serve up dinner for Lord ———;’ on this harmless effusion of a distempered imagination, the keepers cried, ‘Oh, damn you, are you at that sport? we’ll soon cure you,’ and directly threw him in again. He repeated this exclamation several times, and was so often thrown into the water, that the poor wretch was nearly drowned, and the keepers completely tired with their diversion. Upon my remonstrating with a medical attendant, on this abuse of a salutary remedy, he coolly said, ‘It was good fun!’ Can imagination form an idea of torments greater than are daily witnessed in a mad-house?

A great number of lunatics labor under an imbecility of mind, which incapacitates

them from being aware of the common calls of nature; so that when they are visited in the morning, for the purpose of getting them up, many are found in a very unpleasant state; in consequence of which, they are dragged from their sleeping places, and are forced, with no covering but their shirts, into the yard, where there is a pump, under which they are compelled to stand, and are mopped by their keeper.* This takes place in all seasons. I recollect a female keeper who was in the habit of whipping her people out of their beds, and forcing them to the pump, even when the snow was on the ground.

To describe all the hardships which these miserable beings suffer, would fill a large volume. Nor have they the means of making their grievances known; for when visited by their friends, the keeper, or some other interested person, is present, so that they

* In the series of cruelties which these unfortunate beings undergo, this debasement of the human species, in treating men as the callous post-boy does his jaded cattle, is not the least humiliating and disgusting to reflect on.

dread to relate any thing, lest they should incur farther punishment.

One afternoon in November, a very severe day, at a very early hour, about three o'clock, I observed several wretched females lying three together in cribs, calculated for one person only, and actually in a state of nakedness, a piece of worn carpet being thrown over them. On enquiring into the cause of this cruelty, the female keeper told me that she was obliged to *put them to bed* so soon because they had but one shift, which she must wash against the morning. When I asked why they had not even straw under them, but were laid on the hard boards of the cribs? she answered, that her master said there was no straw, and she must do without it till it came !* Another time, I noticed a woman in a similar situation, and the following morning I saw her *dead in her crib* ! What language will afford terms sufficiently

* I have very frequently observed this deficiency of straw, and have known them wait for a fresh supply for several days together.

strong to comment on such disgraceful, such diabolical inhumanity?

I recollect a female patient, the wife of a respectable tradesman, who was treated with excessive cruelty by her keeper. From the violent blows this unfortunate woman received against the bedstead, while being got up, and by other means, she exhibited an appearance truly horrible. In addition to this ill usage, the keeper was in the habit, when feeding her, of forcing down, with every mouthful of food, a tea-spoon-full of salt; and on being asked why she did this? she answered, it was for the purpose of making the patient thirsty, because she would not drink; her husband, on visiting her, observed the treatment she had experienced, and removed her: the mistress of the house was also remonstrated with by a friend, on keeping such a servant; she replied, that she knew the keeper was very violent and cruel, but nevertheless she answered her purpose in getting a quantity of needle-work done by the ladies who were under her care. This keeper was still employed in the house.

Another patient, on becoming what is termed high, was always, at such times, confined to her crib, with her wrists and legs locked, and while naked flogged with a common hand whip, till the blood has followed the stroke!

The excessive covetousness of the masters of mad-houses, frequently induces them to employ less than the requisite number of attendants; and I have heard a keeper confess, that it was so impracticable at the hour of dinner to attend to every patient, that *some were often totally forgotten!*

From the same cause, patients are frequently left by their keepers, and do each other serious injury; of which the following is an instance. For a supposed affront, a lunatic seized a stick, and struck another so violent a blow on the head, as to occasion his immediate death. For this act the unconscious maniac was so inhumanly treated, that he died soon after. Accidents of a similar nature, though not always attended with such fatal consequences, frequently occur from this

culpable inattention. To which cause also we may assign another most afflicting circumstance; that many patients not being attended to in winter, lose their toes from cold; and some are obliged to undergo amputation of their feet; so that if they recover their intellects, they are cripples for the remainder of their lives. I am at a loss to know how it is pretended to justify this cruelty of exposing patients to the severest rigor of the cold: that they feel it, is evident, from the posture it forces them into, and the contraction of the limbs which ensues; and its farther consequences in stopping the pores, and totally preventing transpiration, are equally obvious: that many are killed by this barbarity alone, I have no doubt, and many more rendered incurable.

The instance of craft and cruelty which I shall now relate, deserves particular attention; unfortunately it is by no means a solitary one.

A young man had got well, and had for some time conducted himself with propriety, so that his friends thought of taking him home, but would first have the opinion of the master of the house: as this was however a lucrative patient, the master was not willing to part with him. He therefore informed them that the patient was not quite well, of which they would be convinced by talking with him. On his introduction he conversed very rationally: the master of the house, however, watching his opportunity, pinched him severely, which occasioned him in great wrath to abuse the master, who, of course denied having touched him, and said it was his usual way of fancying things, and flying into a passion, at which times he did great mischief. This was sufficient for the friends; and before he could recover his temper, he was hurried away by the keeper, to endure imprisonment, with aggravated horrors, for some months longer, and the master was left to enjoy the fruits of his successful manœuvre; the friends being fully persuaded that the unfortunate man was still insane, not supposing it possible that the master could be

such an inhuman villain. A case of greater atrocity, or more truly distressing, can scarcely be imagined.

From the sources above stated, another evil of great magnitude arises, the crowding of patients together in dirty* wetted rooms, by which a damp and foul air is occasioned, that cannot fail to generate disease : as an instance of which, a typhus fever broke out in one of these houses, and carried off great numbers

* Many of these places are so infested with bugs, that I have known patients tumefied all over from their bites ; others I have observed in the melancholy amusement of killing them with a shoe, on the walls at the head of their cribs. Rats also abound to so dangerous a degree, that they often inflict severe wounds ; and, let the situation of a poor creature, confined so as to be scarcely able to move, and exposed to the annoyance of these fierce animals, be considered, and it must deeply interest the feelings of humanity. Lice also prevail in such numbers, as not only to occasion much suffering to the patient, but, from the trouble they give, they heighten the ill humor of the people who should look to them.

before its ravages could be stopped: the year following it broke out again in another house, and in both together near a hundred patients fell victims to it!

This common practice of crouding patients together, which arises from the avidity of the keepers of mad-houses, cannot be too strongly reprobated; for although the consequences may not always be so fatal, yet it produces minor evils continually: and can it be supposed that persons thus crouded together in damp rooms, and who are made to lie on blankets which are washed in the morning, and passing through the drying room, are used the same night, can escape malignant disorders, although they may not suffer speedy death?

I will now call the reader's attention, and I cannot do so in too earnest a manner, to the dreadful situation of *convalescents*.

There are many well-informed men confined in mad-houses, who have long intervals

of reason, are sensibly alive to the horrors of their situation, and could give accurate information of the treatment they receive, but that the master or mistress is always present at examinations, and would, if such patient should happen to be noticed by any of the college of physicians, always state that he is far from being well, and talks as he does from his anxiety to get out. Now, as it is impossible for the college, or for any other persons, however discerning they may be, to determine whether a patient is well by seeing him once or twice, the inspectors are biassed by what the master says, and pass on; and as they are conducted by an interested person, they, of course, are not shewn the secret repositories: and the keepers have their instructions to keep aloof those patients who are likely to speak their minds.

Inhuman as these cruelties are in themselves, they are less painful to reflect on, than their effect on the mind of a convalescent patient, who must be in the greatest danger of being driven again to madness, from the appre-

hension of their recurrence. Thus, no doubt, thousands are rendered incurable, or plunged into irrecoverable melancholy by this horrible inhumanity. It is evident, that in the irritable state of mind of insane persons, a humane and kind deportment on the part of the keeper is necessary, for the chance of restoration to health.

To speak of the general effect on the bodily health of lunatics, which the treatment they usually experience produces, I shall observe, that I have known many unfortunate persons, who, when brought into these houses, appeared to be in very good bodily health, fine athletic men; but in the course of a few months they have become so emaciated from improper treatment, and their constitutions so broken down, that I could scarcely believe them to be the same persons. This rapid decline will not be wondered at when I relate, that *I have known gentlemen, who mixed in the first ranks of society, and who held high situations in the army and navy, kicked and beaten*

by their brutal keepers, and confined in cellars unfit for the habitation of any human being.

As an instance of the effects of ill treatment, I will request the reader's attention to the following case.

A young married lady was taken to a house in the vicinity of London, in good bodily health. After a time, her friends, dissatisfied with her appearance, removed her to another house. Here, however, she deteriorated still more strikingly, and they again placed her in the former house, where she soon died in great misery. Her teeth were completely loosened by the brutal manner of forcing the food, and several displaced; her gums were putrid, and her whole appearance demonstrated extreme ill treatment.

I come now to a part of my subject which more, perhaps, than even any of the facts I have already stated, will fill the reader's mind with horror and indignation.

It is not an uncommon case for female patients, married and unmarried, to become pregnant by the infernal ruffians, masters and keepers, who have the care of them, against whose designs the feeble barriers of separation, and female keepers, afford no protection. What, on recovery, must be the mental torture of a virtuous woman, the victim of these monsters, at such a retrospect? The pen drops from my hand when I think on the maddening sensations of her father—her husband!

It will not now surprize the reader to be told that *suicide* is frequently committed in these abodes of horror; but here, as inhumanity has lost its name, death also has lost its terrors. Accustomed to all its forms, its havoc makes *no noise*. The link which ensures secrecy is rarely broken; and if it be, the voice of compunction is overpowered by cabal, silenced by bribery, or awed by threats.

An abuse of the blackest turpitude has sometimes occurred in these places, but which, as it rather constitutes a political crime, I shall

only mention for the purpose of observing, that were the conduct of persons concerned in mad-houses, closely watched and attended to, it would be scarcely possible should take place; I mean the confining of persons in a perfectly sane state of mind, under the pretence of derangement. Nothing can be imagined of affliction equal to that of a person thus deprived of liberty—the most invaluable of earthly blessings, surrounded on all sides by objects of horror, and continually in fear of experiencing those cruelties of which he is, incessantly, the painful witness. But as none but persons of the most depraved natures could be made the instruments of such inhuman acts, the correction of other abuses, would make nearly impracticable this most dreadful of all. The enactment of a law, requiring the opinion of two physicians for the admission of every patient, would certainly go a great way towards preventing this abuse; but it would by no means preclude the necessity of the utmost vigilance of inspection; for it is evident it could not reach the case of a person kidnapped, and confined without any

authority at all, and which, as I have just observed, can only take place where the parties concerned are of the most abandoned description.

Having now, I trust, sufficiently detailed the cruelties and abuses which take place in mad-houses, it only remains for me to consider their causes, and what remedy it may be in our power to apply.

From an attentive perusal of the foregoing relation of facts, the intelligent reader will perceive that these atrocities arise,—

I. From the want of a thorough investigation of the character and disposition of the masters and keepers of mad-houses.

II. From masters being allowed to engage keepers, without the approval of proper inspectors. For want of this regulation, the lowest and most hardened wretches are frequently hired, ready to execute any commands, and naturally inclined to the most brutal exer-

cise of a power, which should be delegated only to the considerate and humane.

III. From the visiting committees not minutely and frequently looking into every possible receptacle in each house, conversing freely with convalescent patients;* inspecting the food; the cloathing; the cleanliness observed; the number of attendants employed; the proper temperature and ventilation of every room, the number of patients in each; and with the utmost care observing any *marks of ill-treatment*, which a patient may bear upon him.

IV. From a credulity to the tales of masters and keepers, which may arise from the difficulty with which a liberal mind will conceive the possibility of the existence of abuses;

* The impossibility of a patient making known his real situation without this attention, is obvious: and the state of a convalescent, who finds himself without a friend in the world to whom he can communicate his sufferings, is too painful for contemplation.

at the bare mention of which, the least portion of humanity must recoil with horror.

V. From no enquiry being made into the causes of the death of patients; so that many are said to have died in a fit, who have destroyed themselves, or been choked in the act of forcing food or medicine; killed by a blow, or other ill-treatment.

VI. From suffering turbulent maniacs to be placed with patients who are quiet.

VII. From inspection not taking place at all hours, *and without a possibility of expectation by the parties interested*. Unless this most important desideratum be obtained, every other precaution will be vain and nugatory. A notice of ten minutes only would be sufficient to make elusion easy.

It would greatly promote the views of reform, were a certain number of professional men, licensed by the college, to make *visits of observation whenever they thought proper*; this

would not only be the surest check on misconduct, but would probably throw lights upon the subject of insanity, which could not be so well obtained by any other means.

The remedy, then, for these abuses is, I conceive, clearly pointed out; and unless it can be effectually applied, it were better at once to put an end to the existence of lunatics, than to condemn them to such lingering tortures: for the treatment they receive in general, is as certain death to them, as opium or a halter would be, but with thousand-fold aggravation.

Although to doubt the impression which a perusal of the preceding statement will make on the reader—to doubt the feelings of fathers, children, brothers, relatives—men! would be an insult to our nature; I must be allowed to observe, that pity and compassion, unaccompanied by action, are idle virtues; to be christians, we must *do* good—to merit happiness, we must be the active promoters of it. The deep-felt sigh,—the pang that rends the

bosom, cannot wipe one tear from the eyes of our suffering fellow-creatures. It is true, if we were constantly alive to the wretchedness around us, it might be asked, where we should find a resting-place on earth? If our hearts were wholly unsteeled against the misfortunes of others, it would be impossible to enjoy a moment's repose; and in fact, whatever opinion we may entertain of the tenderness of our natures, it is not often that we really feel for others—when we do, our sensations are keener than when we feel only for ourselves; because we know the extent of our own feelings, but we cannot ascertain that of others. But, notwithstanding we are thus constituted, there are objects of sympathy from which the well-disposed can never wish to turn aside. And whence can the cry for help reach the heart so directly as from the helpless? From those whose condition renders them obviously incompetent to their own protection? The three states, therefore, of infancy, age, and imbecility, present a natural and resistless claim to the attention of every considerate mind.

Let those, then, whom this undisguised narration of facts shall move to compassionate the situation of the many unfortunate beings, who, laboring under the most pitiable of calamities, are exposed—defenceless, friendless, to such inhuman treatment, join with perseverance in the endeavor to put a stop to the perpetration of barbarities, which are the opprobrium of human nature.

THE END.

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